



MONTANA AERONAUTICS DIVISION



Vol. 29, No. 8

MONTANA AND THE SKY

August, 1978



FORMER MONTANA PILOTS ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT MOURNED

We regret to report that Robert Wheatcroft died in a farm accident July 30, 1978. Bob was a longtime Sand Springs area rancher. He was an active member of the Montana Pilots Association and organized the Garfield Skyriders local MPA hangar in his area. He also served as the state President of the MPA in 1974-75 and was an active supporter of aviation legislation in Montana.

Bob's continued contribution will be a loss recognized not only by the MPA but aviation throughout the state.

Bob also was a life member of the Miles City Elks Lodge; a life member of the Jordan VFW, which he had served as a commander; longtime member of the Garfield County Selective Service Board; and had served as a Director of the Miles City Salesyard.

Surviving are his wife, Edith, his mother and four sons.

On behalf of the entire Montana aviation community, the Montana Aeronautics Division extends condolences to the Wheatcroft family.

THE BIG "X" MEANS RUNWAY - TAXIWAY CLOSED

Montana airport managers have reported that aircraft have landed, or taken off, while the X is in place.

There is no FAA or State regulation regarding operations under those conditions **except** it is published in the Airman Information Manual that an X means the runway or taxiway is **closed**. It does not mean **land at your own risk**. It does not mean do not use the part of the runway or taxiway that contains the X.

The closing of a runway or taxiway is performed by the airport management. The entire field must be closed (marked with an X) during an aerobatic airshow. That is an FAA determination. The airport management will make use of the X when he determines that a hazard exists. An X placed in the middle of the airport generally means the entire airport is closed. An X on only one of the runways or taxiways means that particular unit is closed.

GADO FAA office says an operation involving an X on the runway or field, concerns FAR 91.9, "Operation of an

aircraft in a careless or reckless manner." Under those conditions, a citation can be issued. The liability insurance carried by all public airports probably would be negated if the X is in position.

RENO NATIONAL AIR RACES

The Reno National Air Races (perhaps the last of these historical races) will be held September 15 through 17. We have received some group rate information for those who might be interested in attending. For ten or more persons you may travel to Reno for three days and two nights at a cost of \$205.50 per person. This price includes air fare at \$156.50 (round trip Helena-Reno-Helena) and \$49.00 per person lodging (based on double occupancy) at the Gatekeeper Motel which includes their fun pak. This does not include the cost of the air show tickets which can be purchased at the gate of the Stead Airport.

Should you be interested in going contact Adventure Travel Service, P.O. Box 1711, Helena, MT 59601, or call (406) 442-4056.



Frank Wiley addressing the gathering at the dedication of Frank Wiley Field. (See article inside)



ADMINISTRATOR'S COLUMN

I attended the Antique Fly-In and Air Show at Frank Bass' Beacon Star Antique Airfield near Moore, Montana, on July 15 and 16. This was the largest fly-in that I have attended in Montana. Over 80 aircraft flew in to participate in this event with attendance near 1,500.

Many antique airplanes flew in from as far away as Texas and California. Most of the people camped at their planes on the lush green facilities.

There was a steak bar-b-que served Saturday evening followed by a dance with music provided by a dixieland jazz band.

Sunday featured a hotcake breakfast then three thrilling aerobatic shows flown by Al Newby in his Antique Great Lakes Trainer, Al Peitch in his Star Duster 2 and Ron Litton in his modified Taylorcraft. The Bozeman skydiving club provided spectacular aerial acts both Saturday and Sunday.

Although telephone service was temporarily interrupted during the Saturday activities Frank was able to maintain communication with the outside world by radio.

It must have been gratifying to Frank, his family and helpers to witness the tremendous success of the first Antique Air Show held in Montana. He has indicated that he is considering hosting this as an annual event.

Due to insufficient space in this month's newsletter we will feature an article and photos in our next issue on the fly-in. I wish to congratulate Frank and all those who helped for an outstanding job.

I attended the annual Schafer Meadows Fly-In on July 21 to 23. Although the turn out was light, we did have a large work crew on Saturday. Rocks were picked from the runway, holes and ruts were filled with clay and general campground clean up was performed. Fortunately, all was not work, and everyone enjoyed the beautiful weather and had a relaxing weekend in this flyer's mountain paradise.

I wish to thank Dick La Vanway of the U.S. Forest Service for providing us with a team of horses and a wagon in which we hauled the clay.

I was saddened to learn of the death of Bob Wheatcroft. Bob was killed in a tractor accident on his ranch near Jordan on July 30. Bob had been active in Montana aviation for many years and his contributions will long be remembered by his fellow flyers. On behalf of the Montana Aeronautics Division and the Montana Aeronautics Board I wish to extend sincere sympathies to Edith and the entire Wheatcroft family.



Rock pickers on the Schafer Meadows airstrip.



The campground area was dotted with tents, lanterns, food and people during the Fly-In. The new campfire grills were really put to use!



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THURBER'S OF HELENA



There were a lot of hands on deck to help fill in holes and ruts that had developed in the Schafer Meadows runway.



Morris Rudio (second from right) supervises the gang of mole-hole hunters. The mounds were leveled to make the airstrip safer.



What more could you ask for? It was beautiful weather, scenery and wonderful group of people gathered for the Schafer Meadows Fly-In.

NASAO CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN INDIANAPOLIS

The Aeronautics Commission of Indiana will host the 47th Annual Meeting of National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO) in Indianapolis on September 25-29.

NASAO represents the Commission and similar state aviation agencies of 48 other states, with headquarters in Washington, D.C.

All business sessions, which are open to all who register at a fee of \$65.00 will be held in the Indianapolis Convention Center where a number of exhibits will be on display.

Persons interested in attending should notify NASAO, 444 North Capitol St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005 to assure proper advance planning for seating at business sessions, identification badges, hotel reservations, and to receive a copy of the final program for the meeting.

WHY FILE A FLIGHT PLAN?

By: Major Duane Cocking
Civil Air Patrol
Liaison Officer

When a pilot plans a flight, possibly the furthest thing from his mind — that is unless he's a student pilot — is the thought, "What would happen if I should crash?" No pilot would take off if he felt the flight would end in disaster, and yet last year 4,288 pilots were involved in crashes throughout the country. When we consider the fact that over 36 million hours were flown, only a very small percentage of flights that took off did not log a landing, however, the fact remains that some flights do end in disaster.

Since it is virtually impossible to prevent all crashes, pilots should take every precaution to insure that they will be found if they should be so unfortunate. The best way to assure prompt rescue is to file a flight plan. A flight plan will be the best indication to a search and rescue mission coordinator as to an individual crash location.

The Air Force Rescue and Coordination Center has some very interesting statistics regarding pilots who did or did not file a flight plan. Pilots who filed an IFR plan were found an average of 3 hours and 58 minutes after their crash.

Pilots who filed VFR were found an average of 38 hours and 10 minutes after crash, and pilots who did not file at all were not found until 3 days and 10 hours after crash. The USAF report further states that probability of survival for an injured crash victim after 24 hours under ideal conditions is slim at best. An uninjured crash victim who is in shock (normal for the circumstances) will very rarely live more than 3 days.

Great Falls Flight Service Station personnel state that it takes less than 3 minutes to file, and they offer a free weather briefing. That could be the most important 3 minutes of your life.

So in answer to the question "Why file a flight plan?" one very important answer is — So that if something should go wrong you'll stand a better chance of being rescued.

CALENDAR

August 25-27 — FAA Density Altitude Clinic, Coeur d'Alene, ID. Contact Seattle (206) 767-2590 or Spokane GADO (509) 456-4618 for further information.

August 27 — Baker Breakfast Fly-In. Contact Fred Williams (406) 778-2508 for further details.

September 15-17 — Reno National Air Races, Reno, NV. See article in this issue.

September 25-29 — Aircraft Crash and Rescue School, Great Falls. For information call (406) 761-7885.

September 25-29 — NASAO Annual Meeting, Indianapolis, IN.

October 1 — Yellowstone Airport closes for the season.

October 2-4 — American Association of Airport Executives' Annual Airports Conference, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK.

October 6-8 — Montana Flying Farmers Convention, Havre.

October 12-15 — Third Annual Mid-America Fly-In and Annual Membership Meeting of National Pilots Association, Point Lookout, Missouri.

October 24-26 — Aviation Maintenance Foundation, First Annual Symposium, Oklahoma City, OK — Contact Richard Kost, P.O. Box 739, Basin, WY 82410, (307) 568-2466.

October 28 — Second Annual Great Falls to Jackpot "Halloween Air Race." Contact Patti Thompson, 2824 Fourth Avenue South, Great Falls 59405 for further details.

DEDICATION OF F



Frank Wiley addressing the crowd at the Saturday night banquet.



The radio controlled model airplane club provided everyone with a demonstration.



Gordon Sands (left), Frank Wiley, Jack Milburn and Al Newbury at the Miles City Airport dedication. These gentlemen represent 217 years of piloting.

It was quite a different setting than the first dedication of the Miles City Airport back on Sunday, September 23, 1928. There were sixteen planes from nine communities participating in that celebration. And, of course, Frank Wiley was there. The 50th Anniversary of that same airport was definitely different. There were about 1,000 in attendance for the dedication of Frank Wiley Field in honor of the native Miles Citian and pioneer Montana pilot.

There were two days of activities, July 8 and 9, which culminated in an air show on Sunday. Speakers at the banquet held Saturday evening included Bernie Geier, FAA; Mike Ferguson, Aeronautics Division; Walter Ulmer, County Commissioner; L. B. Foster and Lyman Choate, longtime Miles City pilots; Jack Burk, Pan American pilot, who said that Wiley gave him his first airplane ride at age 10; Jack Milburn, longtime friend of Wiley's; and many other all toasting Mr. Wiley for his courage and rugged spirit.

Sunday began with a fly-in breakfast. During the morning flour bombings and spot landing contests were held. Both contests were won by Pat Magnuson of Miles City, who is a grandmother and received her private pilots license about two months ago.

Just before the opening of the three-hour air show and rededication of the airport a chicken dinner was served.

Starting off the show was a skydiving

exhibition by the Ron Litton family of Billings, which was followed by the actual rededication of the airport. Following the ceremony Litton put on an aerobatics exhibition. At the conclusion of Litton's show there was a display by smokejumpers from the Forest Service. Also included were several radio-controlled model aircraft demonstrations by the Miles City and Billings Radio-Controlled Model Clubs.

Dr. Lloyd Bowman of Miles City chaired and coordinated this event. A special thanks to him from all those who enjoyed this golden 50th anniversary.



Al Newby (left), Frank and Ron Litton.

FRANK WILEY FIELD



Sky divers dotted the sky Sunday morning at the preliminary dedication activities.



Frank was busy most of Sunday morning autographing "Montana and the Sky" books, which he authored.



Frank and Rose Wiley (left), with Skeeter and Doris Carolson, Spokane, Washington.

Carlson



Dr. Lloyd Bowman, Miles City and Mike Ferguson, Aeronautics Division Administrator attend the Frank Wiley Field dedication banquet.



RICHARD BALDWIN

Back in 1940 Dick took his first flying lessons from Roy Schreck. Roy must have provided Dick with great incentive because in 1942 Dick joined the Army Air Corp. He went in as an Aviation Cadet and was sent to multi-engine instructor school. Upon leaving the Air Corps Dick was a flight instructor in single-engine, multi-engine land and single-engine sea planes.

The Army checked into Dick's record and found him to be invaluable during the Korean War and called him into service. Dick stayed in the Army for 17 years and was assigned duty as an instrument flight instructor, helicopter flight instructor, Army Aviation Instrument Examiner, Aviation Adviser, he patrolled the East/West German border, and was Flight Operations Officer in Europe.

Dick retired from the Army in 1967 and came to work for the Montana Aeronautics Division during that year. While chief pilot for the Division he flew Governors Babcock, Anderson and Judge. In approximately 14,000 hours of flight time Dick has an outstanding record of having no accidents.

AIRCRAFT CRASH AND RESCUE SCHOOL

By: **Gerry Burrows,**
Aviation Representative

The purpose of this school is to provide information and skills to fire service personnel for effective accomplishment of the various tasks involved in aircraft emergencies. It is further designed for all types of fire protection organizations and covers both conventional as well as specialized aircraft fire fighting apparatus.

This is one of the few FAA certified courses in the nation and is sponsored by the Montana Air National Guard fire department and the Montana Fire Services training school. It will be hosted and held at the Great Falls International Airport.

Registration is at 8:00 a.m., September 25, with the school lasting through the 29th.

Persons responsible for providing fire protection on their airport or otherwise interested in this type of training should contact the Montana Fire Services Training School, 2100 16th Avenue South, Great Falls, Montana 59405, or phone (406) 761-7885.

All students will be required to participate in all hot drills and all necessary protective clothing will be provided by the school. A registration fee of \$3.00 is required.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

By: **Jack Wilson,** Chief
Safety & Education Bureau

As most of you know by now the Canadian aircraft, CGWUK, which had been missing for over a year on a flight from Calgary, Alberta, Canada to Billings, Montana, was found the end of July in the Snowy Mountains just south of Lewistown, Montana. Most of you will probably recall the hours of flying and the days that were expended in search of this aircraft and all of the various coordinations and communications which were necessary between Canadian and United States authorities in which the large scale prolonged search was conducted.

Don Smith, who was flying patrol for Skymart Aviation from Great Falls, spotted this wreckage on one of his route flights. We wish to thank him for his attention and also his dedication during the search of this aircraft.

The aircraft had crashed in a very inaccessible spot which could not even be reached by helicopter. It was in a very steep, rocky area and undoubtedly was covered by snow immediately after the crash, which would have made it impossible to be seen by the searching pilots. The aircraft was equipped with an emergency locator transmitter (ELT) and at this time it is not known why it was not heard by any aircraft or why it was not activated. Again, thanks to Don Smith for a job well done. We certainly appreciate it.



BERNICE PEACOCK

Bernice was born in Chicago, Illinois on May 7, 1918. She was an honor student both in grammar school and high school. Pointing her life toward business, she enrolled and graduated from Bryant and Stratton Business College and worked at various jobs in Chicago including an advertising agency and as a reporter on a trade paper.

In January of 1942, she married Frank Peacock in Chicago, and in 1948, they moved to Montana where Frank had a job as a chemist with the Montana Livestock Sanitary Board in Helena. Bernice's career found her working as secretary to the Speaker of the House in the 1949 Legislature. Prior to that she worked for the Internal Revenue until the adoption of the first son, Barry, in 1945. She then found herself helping her husband operate a poultry farm for the next 15 years. During that time they adopted three more children, Sharon, Michael and Debbie, the last of whom just graduated from Capital High School in Helena.

Bernice went back to work in 1967 as a secretary at the Montana Aeronautics Commission, retiring after 11 years on June 30, 1978, as an Administrative Assistant of the Montana Aeronautics Division.

Bernice now has four grandchildren: Barry, the oldest son, is married and has a boy and a girl. Sharon, the older daughter has a daughter and a baby boy born last July.

Bernice was very active in the Helena Legal Secretaries Association for many years. She was a hard worker and chairman of many committees, finally working her way up to President of the chapter in 1973.



Douglas B-26, one of the fastest tankers in use has Pratt & Whitney R2800 engines which develop 2,000 horsepower each. It can haul up to 1,000 gallons of retardant. Recently Lynch Flying Service of Billings has invented a STOL Modification for the B-26 which makes it more stable at slow speeds.



Lockheed P2-V, considered one of the best tankers has two R3350 Wright radials of 2,400 horsepower and two J-34 jet engines. It carries up to 2,400 gallons of retardant.



Fairchild C-119, has two 3350 Wright radial engines on the wings and has been modified by adding a J-34 jet engine above the fuselage. This bomber can haul up to 2,400 gallons of retardant.



Douglas DC-6, once a proud airliner now carries 2,000 gallons of fire retardant. Equipped with four Pratt & Whitney R2800 engines of 2,000 horsepower each.



FIRE RETARDANT BOMBERS

By: Ted Mathis, Manager
Yellowstone Airport

Did you ever look up at the sky and see a huge pink bellied aircraft churning along and wonder what it was and where it was going? Chances are it was a fire retardant bomber on it's way to or from a forest or range fire. These grand old birds come in all shapes and sizes and serve a very important role in fire control.

The fire retardant bomber is used to do just as the name implies, "retard," slow the advance or progress of a fire. It is seldom used to try to put a fire out by itself but rather to help the ground crews as they battle a blaze. The retardant bomber is most effective on small hot spots and is seldom used on spots over ¼ acre in size. The heavy mud like retardant material which these tankers carry is known as PHOS-CHECK. It is made of ammonium phosphate and other additives which coat the unburned fuels in the fire to make the more fire resistant. This substance is mixed with water which cools the fire.

The fire retardant tanker pilot might start his season in a southern state such as New Mexico or Arkansas and move north to Montana as the season progresses and the fire probability lessens in the south. The retardant bombers are owned by private contractors and placed on contract to the U.S. Forest Service and other fire control agencies each year. The season may start in March or April in the south and end in October in the north. Depending on the type of fire season in the area, the pilot may fly from 25 to 300 hours per year with the average being around 100 hours.

Montana has five fire retardant bases located at Kalispell, Missoula, Helena, Lewistown and West Yellowstone. The accompanying photos show some of the most common retardant bombers used in Montana.

Our thanks to Jim Larkin and Jim Keele for much of the information in this article.



Consolidated PB4Y-2, a former Navy aircraft equipped with four R2600 Wright engines of 1,800 horsepower each. This tanker can haul 2,400 gallons of retardant.



Boeing B-17, still a bomber but now carries 2,000 gallons of retardant. The B-17 is equipped with four Pratt & Whitney R1830 engines which develop 1,200 horsepower each. In this photo Jim Keele brings the old bird in for a landing on three engines.

STARVATION

Modern aircraft possess a marvelous combination of efficiency, range, load carrying capability, speed and ease of operation. These factors provide the pilot with a great deal of mission flexibility. Obviously, the more alternatives available to a pilot, either in flight planning or enroute, the less there will be the probability of "surprises." All this is to say that running out of fuel is more difficult to do in today's aviation environment than ever before; difficult, but not impossible. It seems that pilots who run out of fuel live by one or more of the following Ten Commandments: 1) do not visually check fuel supply, 2) do be ignorant of your aircraft range; "when in doubt, stretch it out", 3) do not check weather, 4) do not compute loss of time due to winds, 5) do fly long distances VFR on top of cloud layers, 6) do not lean the mixture properly, 7) do not fly at speeds that produce the best specific range, 8) do not visually inspect for signs of fuel cell leaks, 9) do not secure fuel caps properly, 10) do not monitor fuel tank usage during flight or receive weather updates enroute.

Wouldn't it be nice to be as sure of anything as some people are of everything?

AIR POCKETS AND HEROS

By: Dale Uppinghouse,

Accident Prevention Specialist

How many times have you seen featured on the evening news, a HERO with a wrecked airplane? The HERO was betrayed by faulty fuel gauges or he escaped with his life from an "air pocket." Those are fine stories to feed to reporters, but they insult a pilot's intelligence.

To those who failed to read the usually obvious signs of a downdraft—Please don't tell the rest of us that you encountered an "air pocket." Likewise, is there one airperson around who has not been warned, re-warned and warned again about density altitude? If you do crunch an airplane in a high density

altitude situation, please do not tell us you encountered "bad air," "dead air," or an "air pocket."

Downdrafts are to be expected on the lee side of hills, mountains, cliffs, etc. High velocity downdrafts will undoubtedly be found in and around thunderstorms and line squalls. Experienced pilots of light airplanes and gliders can tell you of other places you can expect to find down traveling air.

Most of the "out-of-fuel" accidents have been done to airplanes with those long range tanks! These tanks are approximately 6' long by 6" deep. They are neoprene bags held in the wings by snaps or Velcro fasteners. They are going to undulate as the fuel sloshes back and forth, aren't they? Some of the snaps will occasionally come loose in turbulence. How accurate can that float be as it bobs around in it's tiny

space in that rubber bag? Who believes these gauges? The same person you saw on TV blaming the accident on the fuel gauges.

If you started flying last Thursday we would not expect you to know about airplane fuel gauges, downdrafts, density altitude, etc. It is important, however, to know about these things. We urge you to find out the easy way. Ask your flight instructor, safety counselor, or the FAA Accident Prevention Specialist. Save the airplane for flying.

Two caterpillars were crawling across the grass when a butterfly flew over them. They looked up, and one nudged the other and said: "You couldn't get me up in one of those things for a million dollars!"

MEMBER

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE AVIATION OFFICIALS

PURPOSE—"To foster aviation, as an industry, as a mode of transportation for persons and property and as an arm of the national defense; to join with the Federal Government and other groups in research, development, and advancement of aviation; to develop uniform laws and regulations; and to otherwise encourage co-operation and mutual aid among the several states."



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